

VHHSO News Bites

Upcoming Events:

- National Volunteer Week—May 12th
- Mother's Day—May 12th
- Clinical Addition Ribbon Cutting Ceremony—May 17th at 1pm
- Memorial Day, May 27th —Federal Holiday

Inside this issue:

Employee Awards 2

National Salute 3

Spotlight On: Homelessness 4

Patient Letters 5

Employee of the Month 6

Employee of the Month 7

Associate Director Retirement 8

Clinical Addition Update 9

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Message from the Director

It's been a year and a half since I started as Director, and I wanted to take a moment to say how proud I am of all of the hard working, dedicated staff who provide the highest quality healthcare to our Veterans. In this timeframe, we have made tremendous accomplishments. We received the Robert W. Carey Award, the Arkansas Governor's Quality Award for Achievement, and most recently the Carey Circle of Excellence Award! Our Homeless Programs and Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center were accredited by CARF.



We opened our new Palliative Care Unit, and the feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive. Also, the progress is moving forward with activating our new Clinical Addition. With the new Clinical Addition activation, we will be offering new services to Veterans such as sleep studies. Our lab area will be expanded and we will be moving several staff back onto the main campus who are currently on Sun-bridge. While there will be challenges, I know the staff will be able to meet those head on as we have in the past, and I look forward to working with everyone on many new initiatives.

VHHSO Wins Robert W. Carey Circle of Excellence Award

VHHSO is proud to announce that our facility has been selected to receive the Robert W. Carey Circle of Excellence Award. In 1992, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established the annual Secretary's Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards to recognize organizations that have implemented exemplary approaches to systems management. This award provides a model for VA organizations to measure their performance against other public and private sector organizations.

Every employee contributed to this award through hard work, dedication, and providing quality compassionate care to our Veterans. This award should serve as a reminder of all the great work that was done across VHHSO this last year. Congratulations to all VHHSO staff on this recognition, and on your hard work and dedication as you continue to serve our Veterans.



Employee Awards

Congratulations to the following VHSO staff members for receiving length of service awards:

June 2012:

20 Years Earl Blades, Vet Center
20 Years Ervin Vaught, Vet Center
25 Years Lela Wagon, N&FS
25 Years Melanie Wood, Office of the Director
30 Years Rebecca Jackson, Surgery
30 Years Marilyn Phillips, Nursing

July 2012:

20 Years Dennis Carter, Fiscal
25 Years Connie McMillin, Office of the Director
25 Years Tracy Surella, VISN Directors Office

August 2012:

20 Years Kathleen Hicks, Primary care
25 Years Donna Neusch, Fiscal
30 Years Luanna Oxford, Primary Care

September 2012:

20 Years Diana Kay Beasley, Primary Care
20 Years Beverly Nelson, Office of the Director
30 Years Janet Peterson, Primary Care

October 2012:

20 Years Robert Holmes, Human Resources
20 Years Donald Chaffin, Primary Care
25 Years Pamela Austin, Chief of Staff
25 Years Melinda Graham, Environmental Management Service

November 2012:

20 Years Joseph Kincaid, Engineering
20 Years Dr. Robert Stilwell, Mental Health
20 Years James Zimmerman, OI&T

30 Years Connie McDaniel, Radiology

December

2012:

20 Years Janet Curl, Primary Care
20 Years Marie Schroeder, Nursing
30 Years Ralph Ramos, Primary Care
30 Years Patricia Woodham, Chief of Staff

January 2013:

20 Years Dr. Paul Provaznik, Medical Service
35 Years Michael Bingham, Pharmacy

February 2013:

20 Years Marsha Vaughn, Associate Director



Employee of the Year: Debbie Atherton

In January VHSO hosted our 8th Employee of the Year Awards Luncheon. VHSO loves our Employee of the Year award because it is an opportunity for our staff to recognize and thank those employees who are going above and beyond in their services. This year's award went to Debbie Atherton. Debbie is a Food Service Worker in Nutrition and Food Services, and has been cited as "an amazing employee with unlimited potential" and demonstrating "great respect for each individual." VHSO is proud to have such a wonderful individual at our facility, and we truly value her effort.



2012 Employee of the Month Winners



Dr. Enderle presents Debbie Atherton with Employee of the Year Award

National Salute

VHSO was pleased to host our annual National Salute to Veteran Patients on Thursday, February 14, 2013 from 10:00am – 12:00pm in our hospital. We would like to thank all of the employees and community members who volunteered to make it such a special Valentine's Day for our Veterans.

In case you missed seeing it or did not know, National Salute is an opportunity to honor Veterans. It is a chance for VHSO to encourage and increase awareness about our comprehensive medical care by inviting members of the community to visit our hospitalized Veterans and serve as VA volunteers for the morning.

School children make valentines and our community volunteers that join us distribute them to our patients who are in the hospital. I am sure many of you saw this happening throughout the hospital on that Thursday. We had a tremendous amount of Valentine's day cards donated and hand made from local school children, and it truly was amazing how kind and beautiful the cards were.

We had quite a few prominent community members stop by including members of the Razorback Tennis and Swim teams, former head coach at the University of Arkansas Ken Hatfield, Mayor Lioneld Jordan, a representative from Congressman Steve Womack's office, and Arkansas State Senator Sue Madison, just to name a few. We also had several of our Veterans who volunteer at the hospital and members from our Veterans service organizations help distribute valentines as well.

Thank you again to everyone who helped make this great event happen! A special thanks to Voluntary Service for putting it all together, and to Food and Nutrition Service for providing snacks and decorating the reception room.



Spotlight On: Homeless Initiative and Veterans Tract and Treatment Court



Do you know all the wonderful programs available to serve Veterans who are Homeless? The Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program encompasses several programs such as HUD/VASH, Grant and per Diem, contract housing, and even Veteran Justice Outreach. Here's a brief overview of the programs hopefully you have heard of:

HUD/VASH

- Department of Housing and Urban Development and VA Supportive Housing Program
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8 vouchers) that allow homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing
- VHSO offers 85 vouchers in Washington County in AR
- 35 vouchers in Jasper, OK

Grant and per Diem

- Promote the development and provision of supportive housing with the goal of helping Veterans achieve residential stability
- Available to all homeless or near homeless Veterans
- 34 transitional housing beds in Webb City, MO
- Available for up to two years

Contract housing

- 15 contract beds at Webb City, MO and Rogers
- 10 contract beds in Fort Smith, AR

Our Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program has grown throughout the last several years, and our staff is working hard to help eliminate Veteran homelessness. In an effort to reach as many Veterans as possible, the program uses:

- extensive outreach to the community (including our Homeless Summit and various other events)
- working with Veteran service organizations
- referrals from the community

VHSO is also working to provide outreach to justice-involved Veterans in the community through our Veterans Tract in the Drug Treatment Court program.

What is a justice-involved Veteran? This can include a Veteran:

- in contact with local law enforcement who can be appropriately diverted from arrest into mental health or substance abuse treatment
- in a local jail, either pre-trial or serving a sentence
- involved in adjudication or monitoring by a court

VHSO is using this program to conduct outreach, assessment, and case management for Veterans in contact with local law enforcement, courts, and jails. Our goal is to provide timely access to VA services for eligible justice-involved Veterans in an effort to avoid unnecessary criminalization and incarceration of Veteran defendants and offenders with mental illness and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI). VA will reach out to potential justice system partners to connect eligible justice-involved Veterans with VA service.

There are numerous Veteran and community benefits that come from this program. This includes:

- Reduced crime; studies find that 75% of Drug Court clients remain arrest-free compared to 30% of those released from prison (Finigan 2007).
- Money saved, the annual cost per prisoner = \$22,650, whereas the annual cost per Drug Court participant = \$6,985 (Pew 2007).
- More comprehensive and closer supervision provided, than other community-based supervision programs
- Six times more likely to keep offenders in treatment long enough for them to get better.

VHSO is very excited to have this program in our communities to serve the Veterans, provide "Freedom for those who fought for our Freedom." We are especially proud to announce that we have had our first graduate go through the program.

Sources:

Finigan, M., Carey, S. M., & Cox, A. (2007). The impact of a mature drug court over 10 years of operation: Recidivism and costs. Portland, OR: NPC Research. Available at www.npcresearch.com.

Pew Public Safety Performance Project. (2007). Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population 2007 – 2011.

Creative Arts Festival

Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, Veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition.

VHSO was proud to again have our Veterans participate in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival – VHSO Local Competition.

Entries were accepted from January 15 – February 22, 2013. In 2011, VHSO hosted the national art competition and Festival here in Fayetteville, and this year we were happy to have so many Veterans again participate at the local level. We had 141 entries from 92 Veterans in 49 categories; the NVCAF program offers 153 categories in art such as woodworking, jewelry, sculpture and painting, creative writing, music, drama, and dance – there is something for everyone.

The key purpose of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is to recognize Veterans for their creative accomplishments and to educate and demon-

strate to communities throughout the country the therapeutic benefits of the arts. Participants in the NVCAF program must be a Veteran, registered at their local VA medical center or state Veterans home, and enter their art at their local VA facility. First-place winners at the local level are forwarded to the national level of competition. Winners at the national level of competition are invited to attend and participate in the Festival. The 2013 Festival will be hosted by the Sierra Nevada Health Care System in Reno, NV.

Take a look at some of the wonderful art that was submitted to our local competition, we certainly have very talented Veterans in our area! Then get ready to plan and submit your 2014 entry.



Patient Comments and Letters

Primary Care received the following letter from a former employee:

I would like to thank all the **staff and supervisors in Primary Care** at the Fayetteville VA for such a wonderful work experience from 2005 to 2012. The knowledge I gained has definitely been an asset, and the relationships and friends I made during that time have

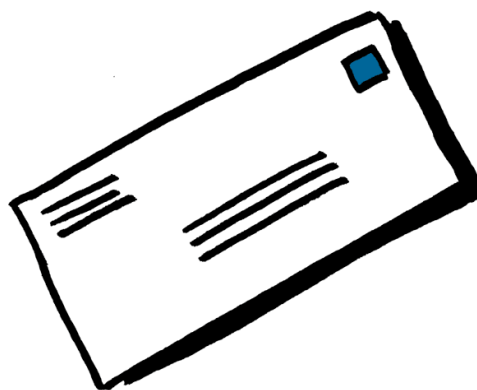
certainly enriched my life. I am very proud to have been a part of such a fine group of employees.

Recent Comments on VHSO's Facebook page:

"Thank You for ALL you do for us!!!"

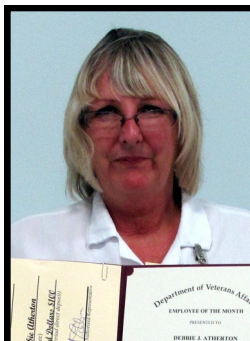
"Thanks to the VA Office of Construction & Facilities

Management (CFM) for building such a nice facility for our veterans!"

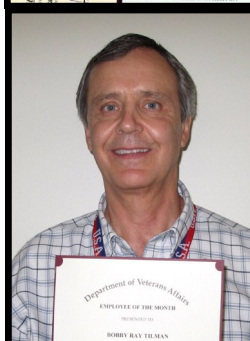


VHSO Employee of the Month

June : Debbie Atherton



July: Bobby Tilman



August: Robin Holland



September: Ashley Strack



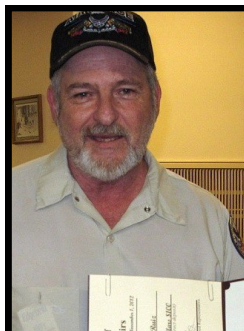
October: Pamela Matchell



A variety of awards are available to qualifying VHSO employees, and one of our favorites is Employee of the Month! This is because it is a chance for employees to recognize other employees. To receive Employee of the Month an individual must be nominated regarding their record of dedicated performance, self-development, and customer service.

VHSO Employee of the Month

November : Michael
Ruiz



It is VHSO policy to recognize our employees who make a contribution in support of the mission, organizational goals, objectives, and the VA's Strategic Plan.

December: Judy Esch-
Brown



Congratulations to all of our former Employee of the Months! Stay tuned to see who wins Employee of the Year for 2012!

January: Shelly Hayden



February: Brenten Byrd



VHSO is on Facebook!

Receive important highlights and updates about happenings at the VA and VHSO

Find us at: www.facebook.com/VAFayettevilleAR

Palliative Care Unit Grand Opening

On February 11, we held the Grand Opening Ceremony and Ribbon Cutting for our beautiful Palliative Care Unit. In case you weren't able to attend, the Ribbon Cutting was held on the Unit. Dr. Enderle officially cut the ribbon, which was a joyful moment for a project that was long in the making.

In the auditorium we held the official Grand Opening Ceremony. Thanks to Salena Wright-Brown for being our keynote speaker, Dr. Landrum for serving as Mistress of Ceremonies, and Chaplain Merrick for delivering the invocation and benediction.

The Palliative Care Unit continues to expand and offer services for Veterans at the end of life, as well as for their loved ones. Please thank them for all of their hard work!!!



Palliative Care Unit



Ribbon Cutting

Mr. Campeau's Retirement

VHSO was sad to say goodbye to our Associate Director Mr. Benjamin Campeau when he retired in February. His VA career began in 1983 as a Resident Engineer for the Office of Construction in Wichita, KS. In 2002 he was appointed the Associate Medical Center Director at the VAMC in Muskogee. He served

in that capacity until five days after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. At that point he began the work of recovery and reconstruction at the VAMC in New Orleans as the Associate Medical Center Director. He joined VHSO in 2008 as our Facility Manager.

Mr. Campeau has a wealth of knowledge and experience under his belt, and his presence is already missed at VHSO. He played a major role in both the clinical addition construction as well as preparing plans for our

Springfield, MO Community Based Outpatient Clinic. VHSO, while certainly sad to see Mr. Campeau go, hopes that he has a wonderful retirement! Take a look at some of the pictures from his retirement reception in February.



Clinical Addition Update

VHSO has made tremendous progress on our new clinical addition, which is slowly transitioning those services that will be in the new building. We are so excited to be nearing completion of this project, and know that our Veterans will love it. Usability is a major design aspect of the new clinical addition, with a focus on eliminating barriers and confusion. We have already moved Social Work, Physical Therapy, Medicine, and Surgery; and they are seeing patients in their new space. Both services are located on the Lower Level (LL on the elevator). Also, several of our services that are off-campus will be moving back, including dentistry, optometry, and audiology! Take a look at how far the building has come:

